mentioned in the House that the death toll had gone up to 92. The Central Government's intervention was sought in this regard.

The Central Government had also received alarming reports relating to violence in connection with the Panchayat polls from other quarters. The reports received from the Government of West Bengal in connection with this matter were incomplete. Hence, it was considered necessary to depute a Central team to West Bengal to assess the situation.

Article 355

4651. DR. Y. RADHAKRISHNA MURTY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 2354 given in the Rajya Sabha on 7th July, 1998, and state:

(a) whether Article 355 appearing under Part XVIII of the Constitution deals with emergency provisions;

(b) since how long before the despatch of the Central team to West Bengal, the State Government failed to keep the Central Government "Posted with the goings on in the State" through written communication or otherwise;

(c) if so, whether such lapse is unique to West Bengal; and

(d) if not, the names of other States and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) It is true that article 355 figures in Part XVIII of the Constitution of India relating to Emergency provisions. However, the said article casts a duty on the Union to protect every State not only against external aggression but also internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India.

(b) to (d) Some Hon'ble Members had expressed serious concern in the Lok Sabha on June 9, 1998 regarding the atrocities committed on women in West Bengal. It was stated that during the recent panchayat elections several women candidates had been subjected to inhuman treatment, including gangrape, and that several party workers had been killed during the election process. It was mentioned in the House that the death toll had gone up to 92. The Central Government's intervention was sought in this regard.

The Central Government had also received alarming reports relating to violence in connection with the Panchayat polls from other quarters. The reports received from the Government of West Bengal in connection with this matter were incomplete. Hence, it was considered necessary to depute a Central team to West Bengal to assess the situation.

Analysis and assessment of law and order and security scenario in the country is an ongoing process in the Central Government. Central officials are deputed to the States in this connection, when considered necessary.

Protection of Crops

4652. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of problems expressed by the border farmers of Punjab for protecting their crops against damages; and

(b) the action proposed to solve their genuine grievances?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) Border fencing and floodlighting have been erected all along the Indo-Pak border in Punjab at some distances from the international border. Except in reverine areas along this border, the land

falling between the international border and the border fencing, is cultivated by formers. It is reported that Pak troops let loose herds of cattle which enter this cultivated area and eat up/damage the standing crops. BSF sends its troops to stand guard and provide security, when the farmers are in their fields. Farmers are parmitted to fence their field with barbed wire at their own expense. Village Coordination Committees have also been formed to sort out genuine problems of the farmers.

Recruitment to SSB

4653. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a faci that at the time of recruitment of SSB only 75% of the vacant posts are to be recruited from the concerned States of Manipur and Nagaland and other 25% are from outside States;

(b) whether it is a fact that as for other States 100% are recruited from their States; and

(c) if so, why 25% are reserved for other States as for Manipur and Nagaland?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) Guidelines for recruitment of constables have been laid down keeping in view the need for better integration and functional expediency of the Organisation. A minimum limit of 45% for the recruitment of locals has been prescribed. In Manipur, the recruitment of is 50% from hill area, 25% from valley area and the remaining 25% from other States. In case of Nagaland, it is 50% locals, 25% from other States of North-East region and 25% of other SSB covered areas outside Nagaland.

Death due to Inhaling Poisonous Gas

4654. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether death of persons due to poisonous gas while digging a traditional well to meet shortage of drinking water has been reported in Najafgarh area of Delhi in recent past;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether death of more people is expected in Delhi by digging out covered traditional wells to meet water shortage in different parts of Delhi;

(d) whether Government propose to intervene in the matter and take serious steps to provide adequate supply of drinking water to Delhi people in near future; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Five persons lost their lives on the 11th July, 1998 while trying to retrieve the tubewell bored into a well (located near the local village pond and not in use for the last 10-12 years), apparently as a result of inhaling some poisonous, gas emanating from the said well. Municipal Corporation of Delhi have decided to, inter alia, inspect all the wells located near ponds to ensure that they are closed down if found unsafe.

(d) and (e) Delhi Jal Board, on an average, supplies about 600 MGD potable water by optimising production at various water treatment plants against the demand of 800 MGD of water. The following measures have been taken to meet the demand for drinking water:

(a) 200 additional tubewells and 268 deep bore handpumps were installed in deficit areas during 1997-98 out of which 9 tubewells and 118 deep bore handpumps were installed in Najafgarh